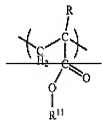


## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently amended)** A resin for a resist, comprising structural units (a) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester as a principal component, wherein

said structural units (a) comprise structural units (a1) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group, and structural units (a2-1) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising a lactone-containing monocyclic group, and structural units (a3) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group, wherein

said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-1) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester and represented by a general formula (a1-1) shown below:

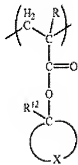


(a1-1)

[wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group, and  $R^{11}$  represents an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group that comprises a monocyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group and comprises no polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon groups], and wherein

said polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group is a hydroxyl group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group

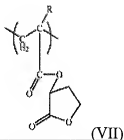
said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-2) represented by general formula (a1-2) shown below:



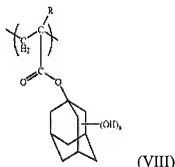
(a1-2)

(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group,  $R^{12}$  represents an ethyl group, and X represents a group which, in combination with a carbon atom to which said group  $R^{12}$  is bonded, forms a group in which one hydrogen atom has been removed from a cyclohexyl group).

said structural units (a2-1) are structural units represented by general formula (VII) shown below:



(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group), and  
said structural units (a3) are structural units represented by general formula (VIII) shown  
below:



(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; and n represents an integer of 1, and  
the hydroxyl group is bonded to position 3 of the adamantyl group)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

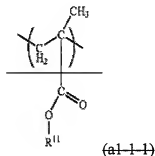
4. (Original) A resin for a resist according to claim 1, wherein said structural units (a) also comprise other structural units (a4) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group, which differ from said structural units (a2) and (a3).

5. (Original) A positive resist composition comprising: (A) a resist resin component that exhibits increased alkali solubility under action of acid, and (B) an acid generator component that generates acid on exposure, wherein  
said component (A) comprises a resin for a resist according to claim 1.

6. (Original) A positive resist composition according to claim 5, further comprising a nitrogen-containing organic compound.

7. **(Original)** A method of forming a resist pattern, comprising the steps of: forming a positive resist film on top of a substrate using a positive resist composition according to claim 5, conducting a selective exposure treatment of said positive resist film, and performing alkali developing to form a resist pattern.

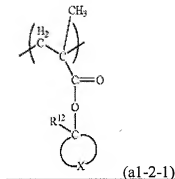
8. **(Currently amended)** A resin for a resist, comprising structural units (a) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester as a principal component, wherein  
 said structural units (a) comprise structural units (a1) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group, and structural units (a2) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group, and structural units (a3) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group, wherein  
 said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-1-1) derived from a methacrylate ester and represented by a general formula (a1-1-1) shown below:



[wherein,  $R^{11}$  represents an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group that comprises a monocyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group and comprises no polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon groups], and wherein

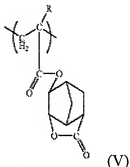
said polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group is a hydroxyl group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group

said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-2-1) represented by general formula (a1-2-1) shown below:

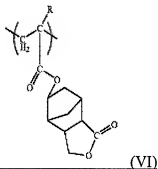


(wherein,  $R^{12}$  represents an ethyl group, and X represents a group which, in combination with a carbon atom to which said group  $R^{12}$  is bonded, forms a group in which one hydrogen atom has been removed from a cyclohexyl group),

said structural units (a2) are structural units represented by general formula (V) or (VI) shown below:

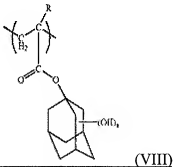


(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group);



(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group), and

said structural units (a3) are structural units represented by general formula (VIII) shown below:



(wherein, R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; and n represents an integer of 1, and the hydroxyl group is bonded to position 3 of the adamantyl group).

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) A resin for a resist according to claim 8, wherein said structural units (a) also comprise other structural units (a4) derived from an ( $\alpha$ -lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group, which differ from said structural units (a2) and (a3).

12. (Original) A positive resist composition comprising: (A) a resist resin component that exhibits increased alkali solubility under action of acid, and (B) an acid generator component that generates acid on exposure, wherein  
said component (A) comprises a resin for a resist according to claim 8.

13. (Original) A positive resist composition according to claim 12, further comprising a nitrogen-containing organic compound.

14. (Original) A method of forming a resist pattern, comprising the steps of: forming a positive resist film on top of a substrate using a positive resist composition according to claim 12, conducting a selective exposure treatment of said positive resist film, and performing alkali developing to form a resist pattern.

15-17. (Canceled)